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LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.



PETER THE GREAT,

(From a print in the British Museum of the Kneller portrait at Hampton Court.)

RUSSIA

BY

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"SLAVONIC LITERATURE" "A SIMPLIFIED GRAMMAR OF THE SIBERIAN
LANGUAGE" "A GRAMMAR OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE" ETC.

SIXTH EDITION

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PREFACE.

I HAVE attempted in the present work an eastern view of Russian history, with such a grouping of the facts as would enable my readers to understand the development of the country from the little Grand Duchy of Muscovy in the fifteenth century to the present mighty empire with its hundred million inhabitants. While I have not intentionally concealed the darker shades of the picture, I have endeavoured to avoid drawing my sketch from an English standpoint only. Still less have I felt inclined to indulge in any of the claptrap abuse with which some Western authors season their books on Russia. All nations have been aggressive in their way, and therefore it is idle to talk overmuch about Russian aggressions; all nations have some blood-stained pages in their annals, and therefore it is something like hypocrisy to be struck with especial horror at Russia's misdeeds.

In reality there is nothing political about my book; I have simply told the truth as it appeared to me. I have treated Russia as an important element in the nationalities of the world, a country of great solidarity and strength, whatever may have been said to the

contrary. She is entitled to the gratitude of the world, were it only for the protection she has afforded to the oppressed Christians of the East. The tide of Mohammedan persecution and proselytism was turned from the time when Peter the Great showed the *rayahs*, groaning under the Turkish yoke, that they could look to Russia for help. It is to her that the new nationality of Bulgaria, which gives such excellent promise, owes its origin. We cannot be surprised

Christians of the East have felt grateful for her assistance. She alone stood up against their oppressors, and her enemies among us must feel that their mistaken policy they have only strengthened her hands.

Whatever the faults of my little book may be, I can honestly say that it is based upon original authorities, and a glance at any of the pages will show. It aims at something more than a compilation; to give a greater freshness to the details, I have illustrated them by translations from the *bilini*, or historical poems, which have come down to us, from the native chroniclers and from contemporary diaries. The main sources of Russian history are stated at length in the concluding chapter of the work, and I believe this list will be found useful to any one who may wish to study the subject more thoroughly. I have added a chapter on Russian literature once ignored in Europe, but now winning its way to notice. Perhaps the brief sketch here given may allure some to the study of this noble language. Its area is rapidly extending; it must inevitably absorb the Ugro-Altaic and Siberian languages. They are fast

disappearing before it; in fact, in the east of European Russia we can pass from village to village and trace the people in gradual stages of Russification. Feeling sensible of the interest which the country must always possess for the ethnologist and philologist, I have attempted a classification of the various languages spoken within its boundaries. Without pretending to be exhaustive, such information will be found useful; it is only in this way that we can understand the exact relations in which the principality of Lithuania and the eastern provinces of the former kingdom of Poland stood to Russia. We must remember that the bulk of the people of both were homogeneous with the Russians in blood, language and religion.

The political and social institutions of the country—including the *mir* and *zemstvo*—have also been briefly described. Every attempt has been made throughout the work to put the names accurately and on a fixed plan, and to put an end, as far as possible, to the chaos which still prevails among us in these matters.

In conclusion I will say of my book in the words of Martial—

“Sunt bona, sunt quædam mediocria, sunt mala plura
Quæ legis hic : aliter non fit, Avite, liber.”

W. R. MORFILL,

OXFORD,

February, 1890.



PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

SINCE the publication of the last edition of this work the Russian Empire has made such gigantic strides that it seemed desirable to bring the history down to the present time. I have therefore given a summary of the reign of Alexander III., and of the nine years during which Nicholas II. has ruled. Some account has been added of the progress of the Great Siberian Railway, and the general expansion of Russia in Asia. Till the threatened outbreak of the war with Japan, Russia has pursued a peaceful course, and has been occupied in consolidating her Asiatic Empire. The only troubles have been those connected with Finland. The relations of Russia to her half Scandinavian dependency have been discussed throughout the volume. The chief difficulty lies in the reluctance of the Finns to submit to the conscription laws.

The politics of Europe are in an unsettled state. As yet the rupture of the alliance between Russia and France, desired so eagerly by the enemies of both, has not taken place. The vexed question of the Near East—the Eastern question *par excellence*, as we may call it—is again coming to the front, and the proximate

break up of the Austrian Empire is anticipated with considerable anxiety. Since the treaty of Reichstadt in 1876, Austria has had a definite position in the Balkan peninsula. The treaty of San Stefano endorsed the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it was ratified by that of Berlin.

Finally, I must thank Mr. Beazley, the geographer, Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, who has rendered me valuable assistance in furnishing me with the latest statistics on the Russian Army, Navy, and Finance.

W. R. MORFILL.

OXFORD,
January 28, 1904.





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